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FIE

FOR ENGLAND

BY

H. FIELDING-HALL.

AUTHOR OF "THE FIELD OF HONOUR," ETC.

LONDON

CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LIMITED

1916

1916

NEW YEAR, that dawnest for us through a
rain

Of blood and tears, what will thy noontide
be ?

And shall the warring nations find
again

At evening, peace upon this storm-tossed
sea ?

We know not what thou bringest, peace or
war,

Disaster, suffering, death, but we know
well

Two things thou canst not bring us, to
have fear

Nor to surrender to the might of
Hell.

FOR ENGLAND

This further do we know, although we
see

Upon their knees the tortured nations fall
And fawn upon their Gods for victory,
That He knows His own ends, and heeds
no call.

If you want God to help you win
the fight,

Then you must help yourself with all
your might.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SONNET	5
FOR ENGLAND	9
THE OUTCAST	15
FREEDOM	53
THE SOLDIER	57
ENGLAND OF MINE	71
THE GOVERNESS	73
THE HEROES' ROAD	105
PATRIOTISM	109
WATCHMAN	147

FOR ENGLAND

I

LISTEN to the echo coming upward from
the street,
A stream of men is flowing.
Discipline and courage ring from out the
measured beat
Which louder still is growing.
Careless they of frost and rain, of hunger,
cold and heat,
For to the front they're going.
The purpose of their lives is near, the
enemy to meet,
So every face is glowing.
They all are men whose bones were made
in England,
Gallant lads who heard their country's
call.
Onward they go
Straight for the foe
Fearless whate'er befall.

FOR ENGLAND

There's nothing that they will not do for
England

To prove themselves her gallant sons
and true.

Think as they go
All that you owe,
And that they go for you.

II

Watch the stubborn battle as it wavers to
and fro,

The shells are thickly raining.

Alas ! the gallant regiments are melting
like the snow

From last year left remaining,

Yet ever thinner though their ranks
beneath the tempest grow,

And fast their strength is waning,

For honour's sake they steadfast stand and
firmly hold the foe,

The fear of death disdaining.

FOR ENGLAND

They are all men whose bones were made
•• in England,
Gallant lads who heard their country's
call.

Naught can dismay
Men such as they,
Fearless whate'er befall.
There's nothing that they will not do for
England,
To prove themselves her gallant sons
and true.
Think of that sight,
Think of the fight,
And that they fought for you.

III

Whose are the graves that lie spread on
either hand
Where Death his crop is reaping?
Who are the heroes who made here their
final stand,
Their honour safely keeping?

FOR ENGLAND

Why did they die and at what supreme
command

Leave wives and mothers weeping ?

Why are they buried in this distant foreign
land

Who should at home be sleeping ?

They all were men whose bones were
made in England,

Gallant lads who heard their country's
call.

Tell of their fame,

Tell that they came

Fearless whate'er befall.

Their lives they gladly sacrificed for
England,

To prove themselves her gallant sons
and true.

It is their pride

So to have died.

Think that they died for you.

FOR ENGLAND

IV

How can we honour both the living and
the dead,

The men who fought for England?
Only by proving that we too are not
afraid

To do our all for England,
So that when we meet again of us shall
not be said

That we did naught for England,
But that on the golden scroll our names too
shall be read

As men who wrought for England.
Come every one whose bones were made
in England

And show that you have heard your
country's call.

Woman or man,
Do what you can,
Fearless whate'er befall.

FOR ENGLAND

Prove that you are worthy sons of England,
Bear yourselves as gallant souls and
true.

Think of the brave
In their lone grave,
And that they died for you.

THE OUTCAST

THE OUTCAST

I

IT was quite dark when the motor coach arrived at Sleepy Hollow for the fourth and last time that day. For it was September, 1914, and the evenings were fast drawing in, though the clear warm weather made the twilights seem longer than usual.

There were a number of people waiting outside the Post Office for the evening paper, not so many as in the morning and of a different class, but nevertheless as eager to hear what news there was. They were mainly workmen now who in the morning had been busy, but who looked forward to the news of the local evening paper to read with their suppers. For they were too interested in the war—who indeed was not?—and though the censorship was already strict

FOR ENGLAND

the time had not yet come when it had become prohibitive.

When the coach was empty the driver took it round to the shed in Moor Lane where it slept, and handed it over to the mechanic who cleaned and cared for it. Then he went out a-foot and back towards the market. Turning the corner he nearly ran into a man. Both stopped in order to avoid collision, and a cultivated voice spoke :

“ Ah, Janeson, is that you ? ”

“ Aye, Squire, it’s me,” the driver answered surlily.

“ Not gone ? ”

“ Nor going neither,” was the curt reply.

“ They want men badly,” said the Squire. “ I heard from my son at the front to-day. Whole regiments are wiped out. They will want every man they can get. Especially fine men like you.” And he looked admiringly at Janeson’s six feet of strong and active manhood.

THE OUTCAST

"They won't get me," returned Janeson. "Let them as have something to fight for go and fight."

"And have you nothing?" asked the Squire persuasively.

"Naught in the world but what my two hands get me," answered Janeson. "You know that better nor me, Squire."

"But what if the Germans come here?" asked the Squire.

"I'll go to Canada," and Janeson grinned. "You'll get your way at last, Squire. You wanted to drive me to emigrate long ago."

The Squire drew himself up, affronted and aggrieved, and moved on his way to the Manor House which lay in the hollow just beyond, and Janeson also went his way.

He was going home to supper, and was hungry. But as he crossed the market-place he stopped and considered. Then he went up to a little booth whence light

and the sound of hammering came forth and put his head inside.

“What ho, George?” he said. “Not gone home yet?”

The man within looked up. Seen whether under the electric lamp that burned above his head in the shop, or in the street by daylight, he was a man to remember, not perhaps very pleasantly. He was short and ill-shaped, clumsy and heavy, even if you had not noticed his club foot. He was only forty, but he looked far more. His face was deeply marked, and his eyes sunken and piercing. His hair was sandy and sparse, and his moustache and beard so much sparser that his cheeks and chin looked like an infertile field where even weeds grew with difficulty. His usual expression when bending over his work of cobbling was that of concentrated thought, but in public this was replaced by a look of aggressiveness that seemed always saying, “I am as

THE OUTCAST

good as you and better." Nevertheless there was at times a look in his eyes that spoke of better things.

He was dubbed a Socialist by the men of the village, and disliked because he was unsocial and would not drink with them ; he was despised as a woman-hater by the women because, conscious of his physical deficiencies, he had never dared to offer love or friendship to a woman ; he was hated by the religious of all sects, who declared him an Atheist because he didn't believe in a God who kept a hell wherein to burn eternally His own mistakes.

So Holt had no friend but Janeson, and when in answer to the young man's greeting he looked up at him you saw that Janeson was to him all that the rest of the world might have been and was not.

"A job to finish," he said cheerfully. "To-morrow's Sunday, lad. No harm to work an extra half-hour to-night."

"I wanted a word with you, George,"

FOR ENGLAND

said Janeson. "But if you are too busy"

The cobbler laid down the boot he was mending and looked fair at Janeson. "Is it so pressing?" he inquired. "Will not to-morrow do? Can't it wait?"

The young man nodded slowly. "Aye," he answered. "'Tis not so pressing for that. 'Tis my haste, you know." And he scratched his head in place of words.

The cobbler laughed. "I know thee, Ned," he answered. "Thou'rt the same as thou wert ten years ago. Thou canst not wait even to ask a question. 'Tis always 'hit while the iron's hot!' with 'ee, and thee art always hot. But to-night I cannot talk. I must finish this job or William Shone's wife won't be able 'to go to church to-morrow and she'd lay the sinfulness on me." He laughed grimly. "To-morrow on the moor?"

The young man nodded.

"We'll start at ten. And bring thy

THE OUTCAST

bread and cheese for dinner in thy pocket 'as when thou wast but a lad. The moor's a good place. It's a good place to walk and a good place to eat. Aye, and it's a good place for talk, far better than a house."

"'Tis that," said Janeson. "'Twill keep till then. Good-night."

The cobbler nodded and turned quickly to his work.

II

The two men walked slowly, crossing the moor. It was near noon now, and they had been on foot for two hours and had come right into the heart of the moor with no villages nor even farms anywhere within sight. There were only the great undulations of the moor with their greys and greens and purples all about them. Above, the sky was blue with little fleecy clouds lost here and there in the great expanse, and a soft wind blew from off the western sea.

FOR ENGLAND

“You’re getting tired, George,” said Janeson, breaking a long and pleasant silence. “We’d better take a rest and eat a bit.”

“Aye, when we come to the tor,” said George. “I know thou art younger and stronger than me, Ned, but I’m not quite done yet.”

So they went on still in silence.

Indeed, they had hardly spoken since they started. The necessity to talk is a town habit, not a country one, for country folk are accustomed to silence. They like silence, they do not speak except for a reason, and they know nothing of conversation. So the two had walked steadily, noting by a nod or word some bird or plant, but had not talked at all.

The wind upon the crest of the hill blew the more strongly and they took shelter behind the rocks. Then they sat down and ate their bread and cheese and an apple, drank some cider out of a bottle

THE OUTCAST

they had with them, and lit their pipes. Only then did the cobbler think the time was come to talk.

“Well, lad,” he said.

But Janeson yet was silent. He prodded at the turf with his stick, thinking how to speak. His friend waited patiently.

“Well, and what hast thee got?” George asked at length to help him start. “What is it troubling thee? Is it a lass?”

The young man shook his head and laughed.

“’Tis the war then,” said George calmly. “They’re trying to drive thee to be a soldier. Aye, I’ve heard talk. And old Miss Brown gave thee a white feather when the other lads went and thee stayed at home. Eh?”

Janeson’s face broadened into a laugh. “I thrashed two of Squire’s gamekeepers last year and I’m ready to thrash any ten

FOR ENGLAND

Germans. It don't hurt me to be called coward."

"No, no," said George admiringly. "Thou art no coward, lad. If thou dost not go to the war 'tis for good reason. Let them as made the war fight. Let them as has anything to lose fight. Let them as praise fighting fight. Thou knowest better. Don't mind 'em, lad. It'll blow over. They never gave thee naught but curses before; they can't do more now. We've learned to bear 'em, lad, you and me."

Janeson looked gloomily at the turf he had prodded into holes. "I met parson two days ago," he said grimly. "Parson stopped me, and says he, 'It don't give the village a good name to see stalwart lads like you at home while the others are fighting.'"

"And what did thee say, lad?" asked the cobbler curiously.

"I said," and Janeson's face grew grim

THE OUTCAST

and hard, "I said, 'And what sort of name did you and the village give mother and me?' I said. 'Just because my father and mother weren't married. She was an "abandoned woman" and I was a "child of sin," you says. What about my good name, Parson?' 'You talk too much to that Socialist cobbler man,' said Parson angrily, and walked away."

The cobbler looked reflectively at the long distances of the moor. "I should have thought of that," he said half to himself. "It don't do you no good, lad, to be friends with me. You've got your life to make."

But Janeson turned on him angrily. "What d'ye mean?" he asked. "You who replaced the father I never saw. You who taught me all I know about the moor and the plants and the birds and the Intelligence that made them. Who but you gave me self-respect and courage and taught me I was no child of sin but of

FOR ENGLAND

love, even if it were love unrecognised by parsons? Who made life possible to me, at all? Give you up, George? Don't talk like a fool." He threw a stone viciously at the tor, whence it rebounded on to the moor, turned himself away, and filled his pipe again. Then he returned to the question in hand.

"So you don't think I ought to join?" he asked again thoughtfully.

The cobbler shook his head.

"You think fighting's wrong?"

"Not all fighting maybe," said the cobbler thoughtfully. "But all these wars that are made by Kings and Emperors and Governments and the rich folk. It's just wantonness and wickedness. The poor want peace, lad; the people, all peoples are for peace and work and quietness, live and let live. The rich don't think of us at all and it's we who suffer most. What do they care? Food for powder."

THE OUTCAST

Janeson did not answer, and presently the cobbler went on : “ When the people get power there’ll be no more war, lad ; no more murdered men nor young widows nor fatherless children. There’ll be no more waste of money on shot and shell that ought to go to feed the poor. But every war puts back that day, and they know it.”

Still Janeson did not move. He was reflecting, looking up at the blue sky where the swallows passed. Very soon now those swallows would be flying away south on their annual migration, moved by an impulse that comes we know not whence. Janeson followed them a long time with his eyes. Then reverting to the subject ; “ So, I mustn’t go ? ” he asked.

“ No, lad,” answered the cobbler ; “ not to the war. If you must go, then go to Canada or the States. It’s no business of yours to kill your brother.”

There was a long silence. Presently they rose to return, and when the men

FOR ENGLAND

began to talk again it was of the plants and insects and birds about them. For Holt was full of that knowledge, that new knowledge which is yet the oldest knowledge in the world, which sees in all life a kinship with our own. He had studied the plants at first unaided and then aided by books, and he recognised with delight their ingenuity, their plans to secure food, their schemes to allure the bees and butterflies, their marvellous workmanship. He knew the wild birds, too, and the wild animals upon the moor. And in communing with Nature he had filled up the blank within his life. All this he had taught the boy, opening to him in his childhood a fairy book greater than any writ by human hand and which has no end.

And so in the late afternoon they came to the bridge where their roads parted.

"George," said the young man suddenly, as they stood face to face about

THE OUTCAST

to say good-night, "did you ever see a regiment going to the war?"

The cobbler shook his head. "A sad sight, lad. No, I never did."

"I saw one in Bellminster a few days ago," said Janeson. "And did you ever see the wounded coming back?"

"Aye, lad, I saw some back from Africa years ago. And it made me swear an oath then against all war."

"Oh?" said Janeson. "Did it make you feel like that?"

There was an echo, maybe of surprise, maybe of something else, in his voice that made the cobbler wince slightly, but before he could say anything the young man held out his hand.

"Good-night, George," he said. "And so you think I'd better go to Canada or the States?"

The cobbler nodded. "You'd do well there, lad. You'd be a rich man before you died. Best go."

FOR ENGLAND

Janeson laughed. "I'll think of it," he said. "Maybe I will. Good-bye again, George."

Then he turned away and walked quickly up the lane without looking behind him.

But the cobbler muttered to himself as he went home. Something had happened to Janeson which he did not understand.

III

It was again September, but now in 1915. A year had passed, a year of war, a year of suffering, a year of courage, a year of change such as the world had never seen before. But to outward seeming Sleepy Hollow was unchanged. The Downs surrounding it were purple with heather as they had been, the crops were gathered in, the early autumn touched the elm trees with its tinge of fire. And the village lived apparently much the same. The coach came and went, the market-

THE OUTCAST

place was busy or deserted according to the hour, the general aspect was unchanged.

Even the cobbler worked as usual in his little shop. Tap, tap, tap, the neighbours heard him at his work early and late, for money came no more easily than before.

But it had been a long year for him, the saddest year, the loneliest year he could remember. Every hour of it had been filled with war, with ruin and destruction, and the end was not in sight. And the lad who had been for so many years his only companion, Janeson, had disappeared.

A week after their day upon the moor together a year ago Janeson had gone. He bade farewell to no one, confided his intentions to no one. On the Saturday night he had driven the coach back to Sleepy Hollow as usual, and on the Sunday he had gone. The railway company missed him because it had to find a

FOR ENGLAND

new motor driver, and Holt missed him, but no one else. In fact, to the Squire and the Vicar and the Methodist preacher and many others his departure was a relief. He had been a standing reproach to the village.

The cobbler felt a little hurt that the young fellow had not told him he was off to Canada ; but, after all, what did it matter ? When he was settled in his new country he would write, no doubt, and till then Holt must wait. But life was dull and the world very evil. Still work must be done, so tap, tap, tap.

“Good-morning, mate,” a pleasant voice remarked.

The cobbler looked up. A tall soldier stood at the doorway looking in, a wounded guardsman from the convalescent home. He had his arm in a sling and a patch upon his eye, but for all that he seemed gay and cheerful. “Morning, mate. Your name’s Holt, I think.”

THE OUTCAST

The cobbler nodded. "Want some cobbling done?"

The soldier shook his head. "I want a word with you," he said. Then he removed the bar and entered. But though inside he seemed in no hurry to begin. He stood embarrassed while the cobbler worked.

"You're a Socialist and you don't like soldiers?" said the guardsman at last.

"I don't blame them," said Holt gruffly. "'Tain't *their* fault.

The guardsman laughed. "Have you got no relations in the war?" he asked.

"Not I," replied the cobbler. Neither in the war nor out. What business has a crippled cobbler with relations? You aren't one, anyway."

"No," said the guardsman. "Not me."

"What do you want?" questioned the cobbler.

"I know a man who might be," said the guardsman. "In my regiment."

"Nonsense," said the cobbler.

FOR ENGLAND

“True,” continued the guardsman. “Came from these parts. A big fellow with blue eyes. Christian name Ted. Used to drive a motor coach. Ever hear of him?”

The cobbler stopped, his heart beating and his hands shaking.

“What d’ye mean?” he demanded. “Did he tell you he was a relation?”

“He did,” answered the guardsman, “a sort of adopted relation. But he didn’t know if you’d own him now seeing as he’s a soldier and you a Socialist, and you told him not.”

The cobbler stared. Understanding was slowly coming into his mind.

“Was his name Janeson?” he inquired tremulously.

The guardsman nodded. He leant against the doorpost and pretended not to see the cobbler. He even presently looked out of the door and whistled. He knew emotion when he saw it, and gave it the respect of silence. A child passing

THE OUTCAST

along presented arms—a stick—to which the guardsman solemnly replied.

“Where did he die?” a voice asked weakly from within.

“Eh?” said the guardsman, turning.

“Where did he die?” asked Holt more clearly.

The guardsman laughed. “Dead? He’s not dead. He’s as large as life, much larger than when you knew him. He’s wounded, but not bad, a bullet through his arm and another in his chest. He’s in the hospital at Idlecombe I came from.”

The cobbler was putting away his work. “The address,” he said.

The guardsman looked at Holt. “He told me you’d be ashamed of him,” he said.

“The address,” said Holt, and closed his teeth; “the address.”

The soldier wrote it down.

“You take the tram from the station,” he explained. “There’s something else about Janeson, only I wasn’t to tell.”

FOR ENGLAND

But the cobbler was not listening. He was making ready to go. And when the coach left Sleepy Hollow half an hour later the cobbler was a passenger.

IV

A rumour began to spread in Sleepy Hollow, started no one knew by whom, repeated from mouth to mouth, rejected invariably as untrue by every hearer, yet repeated by him as truth a few minutes later. It spread even more rapidly than the Russian rumour of a year before and excited even more interest. Janeson the no-man's-son, the lad called after his mother, the child of sin, the Socialist, had not gone away to Canada. He had enlisted. He had enlisted in the Guards. He had been in the fighting ever since the winter. He had done gallant work. He had been promoted sergeant. He had

THE OUTCAST

been wounded. He was in hospital at Idlecombe.

And, most astonishing of all, the Janeson whose name had been in the papers a fortnight back as awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry at Neuve Chapelle was he.

The man Sleepy Hollow had rejected had become a hero of the nation. His name was known to all the world.

Sleepy Hollow buzzed like a hive of bees, first with intense surprise, then, when the rumour had been verified as true, with anger that he whom Church and State and the Nonconformist conscience of Sleepy Hollow had rejected should have dared to raise himself to eminence, and, finally, with a self-satisfied pride that he was a Sleeper. They had worked themselves into the persuasion that if Janeson had come to honour it was the good effect of Sleepy Hollow righteousness coming out and overcoming the man's natural deficiencies.

FOR ENGLAND

At least that was the view held and proclaimed by the Squire and the Vicar. They had sowed the good seed and although the ground was unpromising it had come to maturity at last.

Therefore they rejoiced, and the rest of Sleepy Hollow with them; with conscious magnanimity they prepared a great welcome for the returning prodigal which should mean an official forgiveness of the past and recognition for the future. They sent a deputation to the hospital at Idlecombe to welcome Janeson and arrange with him when he would be received in state and welcomed to his village.

Some, however, there were who secretly doubted. Perhaps Janeson would scorn the overtures made to him. They remembered somewhat uncomfortably that Janeson had not been treated too well by anyone except the cobbler; they had an uneasy consciousness that if Janeson had

THE OUTCAST

turned out well it was rather despite Sleepy Hollow than because of it. They remembered also that he had a strong sense of self-respect, sinful pride it was formerly called, and he might now reject Sleepy Hollow as it had rejected him. That made them uncomfortable until the returning deputation set them quite at ease. Janeson had received them with friendliness, he would certainly come and pay his birthplace a visit as soon as he was well enough, and he would accept with pleasure their reception and dinner. The one condition he had made, only he had put it as a request and not a condition, was that Holt the cobbler, his almost foster-father, should accompany him. And though this was to many a very bitter pill it had to be accepted.

V

The two days of Janeson's visit to Sleepy Hollow will not soon be forgotten

FOR ENGLAND

there. There was a deputation to meet him at the rail-head, a procession of motor-cars to the village, a meeting with speeches, a dinner with speeches, and much private congratulation and shaking of hands. The authorities, civil and ecclesiastical, whatever their private feelings that he whom they had condemned was become famous, behaved well, and the poorer folk, who had always liked the young fellow and never understood why he was persecuted, were unfeignedly glad to see him. He came into Sleepy Hollow like a breath of clean strong mountain air that told of great spaces and the great thoughts that come there, that told of death and of those immortal things that live for ever. To the many he seemed little changed. He had been always a handsome, strong, and gay young fellow. But to those who could understand it seemed that in his eyes was the look of men who have seen

THE OUTCAST

through the veil of death to things that lie beyond, and in his voice there was the echo as of many waters falling down towards a sea. And when he left it seemed as if even in those two days he had brought a change into the little village. He had brought thoughts that troubled its placidity and raised perhaps a ferment that might lead to newer life. Above all there were three men who pondered over his replies.

For to the Squire who asked him in good-natured sarcasm if after what he had seen of war he still believed with the Socialists, and if a democracy could command itself and needed no officers, he replied :

“ No, sir, I have unlearned that. We need masters and leaders, all of us, and always will. And, Squire, if your class would lead us in peace as they do in war there are no men but who would be glad and proud to follow them. For they care for us as for themselves. We are officers

FOR ENGLAND

and men to achieve a purpose that is dear to both of us. They lead us whither we would go, and we would go anywhere they lead us. For we are soldiers first. We are all soldiers together first, with a common aim and purpose dear to all of us, and it is only in the second place that we are officers and men, because only so can we achieve our aim.

“That is so in war. Make it so in peace too, Squire, and you’ll hear no more of democracy. We’ll not grudge you rank or fine houses or money then. We would ask no better than that you should lead. Will you not try?”

And to the Vicar, asking him if on the battlefield he believed in no God, he answered :

“No, Vicar, no. I believe in no fancy God who has to be believed in. But through the battle I saw God and now I see Him still and always. Not your

THE OUTCAST

God, parson—not in the least like yours.”

“What is the difference?” asked the Vicar with the supercilious look of the ecclesiastic towards the layman.

But Janeson only smiled back with seeing eyes.

“There’s all the difference, parson. Yours is a long way off in some heaven; but the God I see is in the earth He made. He’s real, parson, and you don’t want to go to any book to read about Him. I’ll tell you one thing about Him. The God I see who made the world didn’t take all that time and trouble over it for it to be wasted on idle or cowardly or foolish folk. He gives it to whoever will make the best of it. He is behind the strong battalions. And those who won’t save themselves have got to go, parson, be they men or classes or nations. He don’t like loafers. The Sermon on the Mount’s good for the hospitals, but

FOR ENGLAND

not for the fighting line. Tell us about the real God, parson, and your churches will never be empty."

But the Vicar had turned away to go as one who heard blasphemy.

With Holt his conversation was much longer. In order to have a good long talk together they rose very early and reached the top of the Down before the sun had risen. And there seated upon the tor they watched, as many an ancient Briton long ago had watched, the coming of the dawn.

When they first reached the tor the world was still dark, only a paling of the sky towards the east showed the coming of the day. Slowly the light grew out of the night ; slowly across the hills arose the dawn. And the men watched it, silently entranced, feeling the message that the dawn has always to those who understand—that without the night you cannot

THE OUTCAST

have the dawn ; without pain you cannot have pleasure, without work you cannot have ease ; without fear you cannot have courage ; without death you cannot have youth and life. The one is born always from out the other as the night makes day and day makes night. And the darker has been the night the more beautiful the dawn.

They watched and waited.

Along the valleys were white mists that filled them like a sea, only the rounded summits of the downs stood up like islands taking the first rays of the rising sun. But the golden light soon drew up the mists and all the world was bright and new.

“ So you don’t mind, George,” said Janeson. “ You don’t mind that I went to be a soldier, though you told me not ? ” There was almost a laugh in his voice as he asked, a laugh of affection and pride. “ You don’t mind that I too am one whose ‘ bloody trade is war ’ ? ”

FOR ENGLAND

The cobbler smiled secretly, but for a while he kept his silence. Then at last he asked, not in condemnation, but in curiosity : " What made you do it, Ted ? "

The young man shook his head. " I don't know, George. I don't know how it came about. It wasn't that I changed my *mind*. It was as you made it. But something grew inside which pulled me. It grew and grew, and pulled and pulled—and at last I went."

A year ago the cobbler would have replied that it was the base animal instinct of fighting that awoke in Janeson and called him away despite his better self. But now, looking at the young man's face and listening to his voice, he knew well enough it was not a base instinct but something that leads men towards a higher spiritual level than before. Janeson had not fallen—he had risen—so far had he risen that he seemed almost out of the cobbler's range of sight. And Holt listened silently.

THE OUTCAST

“George,” said the young man presently, plucking a heather blossom from beside his feet. “Do you remember telling me long ago, and many times, that these wild flowers were to the Seeing Eye more beautiful than all the great garden blooms and fruits. Because the garden blooms were stupid, cowardly, and inefficient, succeeding only because of the gardener’s care, while the wild flowers were clever and brave and strong and true?”

Holt nodded. “Yes, lad, yes. It’s true.”

And Janeson went on. “So the wild plants hate their degenerate garden brothers as the great spirits hate the material and false.

Holt nodded. Yes, he knew all that. Indeed it was he who showed it to the lad.

“And,” continued Janeson, “it was because life for them was a fight for existence that they maintained their spiritual fitness. And it was because life for

FOR ENGLAND

domesticated plants and animals was one of guarded safety that they became the fools and weaklings that they are. Courage is the reaction of fear, and intelligence is sharpened only by necessity. Did you not think it might be so too with men and nations? You wanted eternal peace, George. What would it make the world?"

"Ted," said the cobbler at last, "I did not think of that.

"If you came with me, George, to the trenches, you would think it there. See how it changes men."

"Ted," said George at length with difficulty, "I wish I could. I wish I could. If only to learn how to think."

There was a long silence then between the men. The day was fully come now, a day of golden mellow autumn weather, full, not with the restless fever of the spring, nor the passion of the summer, but with the rest that comes from work well done and wisdom hardly gained. A soft

THE OUTCAST

wind blew from the western sea and little clouds passed slowly across the blue. Then the two men went home again.

Janeson went back next day. But if the regeneration of England is ever to come it will come from men like him. If ever we are to regain our spiritual stature, to throw off the sophisms of a century of sham, it will come from those who have looked reality in the face.

So it was once ; so it may be again.

FREEDOM

DARK lay the night upon the Flanders
plain,

Broken with rifle flash and bursting shell.
The earth was sick with corpses of the slain,
The air was lurid like the mouth of hell.

And from the trenches came a warning
call—

“Our ranks grow thin and we have
much to do.

The death-machine reaps well and fast we
fall ;

The foe is many and our soldiers few.

“Has England no more men ? Or do
they stay,

Like children, loath to leave their
mother's knee ?

While others fight do they prefer to pray,
And hope that others' blood will make
them free ?

FOR ENGLAND

“ England should drive them forth, should
make them come.

Has she no honour left, no sense of
shame,

That she should shelter in our island home
Men who have lost their manhood and
their name?

“ Perhaps 'tis but their ignorance, they fear
To rank themselves with soldiers in the
fight.

Men should not think of that. Be of
good cheer,

Courage will come to you if you do
right.”

Whereto there rose an answer, sharp and
shrill,

Uttered by many throats with frenzied
breath :

“ We are free men. You shall not bend
'our will,

Nor force us forth to danger and to
death.”

F R E E D O M

To them the trenches answered in
surprise :

“ Freedom is duty, so it seems to us,
If not to you ; then tell us, you the wise,
What is this Freedom that you fear to
lose ?

“ Freedom to do the wrong and not the
right ?

Freedom to reäp what others sow with
tears ?

Freedom to stay at home while others
fight ?

Freedom to give yourselves to craven
fears ?

“ Freedom to laugh while others suffer
pain ?

Freedom to save while others pay your
due ?

Freedom to gather from their loss your
gain ?

Freedom to live while others die for
you ?

FOR ENGLAND

“You call that Freedom ! Ah, that
words should be

Dishonoured into use by such a creed.
He who is slave to self, how is he free ?

He serves two devils, cowardice and greed.

“You say your Conscience will not let
you seek

To face the foe upon the stricken field,
That it commands you turn the other cheek
And rather than resist the foe to yield.

“Where did you learn to call that
Conscience, pray ?

If that be Conscience, Virtue is a Vice.
We have another name for it. We say
What you call Conscience we call
Cowardice.

“So be it, stay at home ; to-day is yours
To eat and drink and talk and take
your ease.

Make all you can of your short passing hours,
For soon you shall for ever hold your
peace.”

THE SOLDIER

THE SOLDIER

THE long warm summer day was drawing towards its evening. The broken sunlight hardly penetrated the wood now, and the green shadow grew deeper and denser. So the man who had been spending his afternoon there rose from his mossy seat and moved away.

At the edge of the wood there was a footpath that led across a pasture to a lane, and a little way down the lane there was a cottage. The man went up to the rose-covered front and discovering the door he knocked. A woman came to the door.

“Good evening, Mrs. Marle. D’you think you could give me tea?”

The woman smiled and then hesitated. “There is a soldier in the arbour having tea. You won’t mind him, sir?”

“I won’t indeed,” the man replied. “I shall like to see him.”

FOR ENGLAND

Then the woman made way and the man walked through the cottage to the garden beyond. There was an arbour there trellised with Dorothy Perkins roses and purple clematis entwined, and within it was a soldier having tea. He was a young man of maybe twenty-five, with a bright, intelligent face. A patch over one eye showed where he had been wounded.

“Good evening,” said the man. “You won’t mind my having tea here too? You are from the Convalescent Home close by?”

The soldier nodded. “Yes, sir. I came last night.”

“I see where you were hit. I hope you have not lost that eye.”

He smiled. “That’s gone. But the other’s right enough. It was a near touch though.”

“Where did the bullet go?”

“Right through the eye, the top of the mouth, and stuck in my jaw on the

60

THE SOLDIER

other side. Here is the thing." Out of his waistcoat pocket he pulled a bullet wrapped in a piece of paper and gave it to the man. The bullet was hardly marked.

"Lucky it didn't expand," the man said as he looked at it.

"I shouldn't be here now," and the soldier laughed. "It felt just like a heavy blow and I lost consciousness. When I came to I was in hospital and it was three days later."

Mrs. Marle came in with a tray containing the tea. She put it on the table and remarked: "And a woman said to him this morning, 'Was that all?'"

The man laughed. "What did she want, I wonder?"

"Some people don't know anything," said Mrs. Marle. "But I've my second husband, my two sons and thirty other relations in the war. I know. I've seen wounds before. I understand about war."

"Pity there isn't more like you,"

FOR ENGLAND

assented the soldier. "But if these Zeppelins don't do any other good they'll teach people a lot. I'd like to see a Zeppelin drop some bombs into . . ." He pulled himself up and grinned. His two auditors smiled in agreement. They each perhaps filled up the blank for themselves.

"I've heard women," said Mrs. Marle, "say that it didn't matter to them if the Germans did come. The women wouldn't be hurt. That was before the war, when I lived in Bournemouth. I've heard ladies say it and think it clever. Them's the people who ought to be bombed. I hope some are."

"People who can't learn patriotism any other way," reflected the man, "ought to be bombed. But the bombs unfortunately don't discriminate."

"Aye, and I've heard working men say it too," added Mrs. Marle.

She tossed her head indignantly and

THE SOLDIER

went away while the man and the soldier looked at each other.

Then the man poured himself out a cup of tea. The afternoon was hot and the tea was refreshing.

"How about the food in the trenches?" he asked. "Is it good?"

"All food in the trenches is good," said the soldier emphatically.

The man laughed. Looking back nearly thirty years he remembered how campaigning furnishes a sauce for everything, how he had eaten bully beef and biscuit with a relish nothing now could have.

"I was a motor mechanic before the war," continued the soldier, "and I made nearly four pounds a week. Now I'm a full private in the Sherwood Foresters with eight shillings a week and all found."

He chuckled to himself as if he enjoyed the contrast and then added, "And I would not change for anything."

FOR ENGLAND

“Do you think they’ll let you go back to the front?” the man asked.

The soldier’s face clouded. “And why not? Isn’t one eye good enough to see Bosches with?”

“You want to go back?”

The soldier turned and stared at the man. “Did you ever see war?” he asked.

The man nodded.

“Then why do you ask?” replied the soldier. “You know.” Their eyes met and both laughed. “Though, mind you,” continued the soldier, “it’s a question of nerves. If a man’s nerves are shaken, and Black Marias aren’t good for them, then he’s had enough. He’s done his bit. But an eye!”

He lit a cigar the man offered him and they both smoked silently for a while.

“How do you like the French?” the man asked presently.

The soldier reflected. “They’re a good enough people in their way,” he

THE SOLDIER

answered. "It isn't our way. They are not so neat and clean in their homes as our folk."

"And the French girls?"

Of a sudden a flush sprang into the young soldier's cheeks. It spread and deepened until it covered his whole face. He turned away to hide it, and the man, conscious that he had touched some hidden romance, went on to try to cover his mistake.

"No doubt you learnt some French."

The soldier, with his head still turned away, mumbled that he had been taught some words only.

"And the gas?" asked the man.

The soldier looked round again, his face still pink. "That's damnable stuff," he said, "and the flame projectors too."

"You think they should not be used?"

He shook his head and answered slowly. "I don't say that. War isn't a game with rules; it's two nations trying

FOR ENGLAND

to kill each other. That's my idea. And if the other side use it, why shouldn't we? Is it because we are too hifalutin', or not clever enough?"

"I don't know," answered the man.

"I've seen our men gassed by thousands and our trenches taken; that is when the wind favoured them. And when the wind favoured us we did nothing." He made a little pause and added, "It is discouraging to the soldiers."

The man nodded, and the soldier continued:

"Besides, there are not enough of us. Look how we had to hold the line at Ypres when the Germans came down on us like a flood. Even when the new army comes out there will not be enough, not nearly enough. But when I go about in England, I see plenty of young men. There were lots in the London streets, lots at Idlecombe; there are lots here."

The man assented and the soldier went

THE SOLDIER

on, "There is no lack of men anywhere. And they leave us to fight for them, to bleed for them, to die for them." His face was pale now with anger and disgust. "I'm not thinking of conscription," he went on. "It should not be necessary. How can any man think that others ought to save him?"

The man was full of thoughts. He could have answered that this terrible doctrine of the vicariousness of salvation, of which the soldier spoke with such contempt, was drilled into every child in its impressionable youth and that many in later life could never emancipate themselves from it. They used it as an excuse for cowardice and laziness and mental apathy. But the man was not there to talk, he wished to hear what this soldier thought.

"We may perhaps save their dirty skins; but what about their souls, I say? We can't save them."

FOR ENGLAND

“They have none,” suggested the man. “They had their chance and they refused.”

“I expect,” continued the soldier, “that it was they or some like them that invented the tale about the Angels of Mons.”

“Oh, you’ve heard of that,” said the man.

The soldier nodded. “If they can get people to believe that angels are going to fight for them, they can stay at home and do nothing.”

The man smiled. He remembered Voltaire’s explanation of the success of the English seamen that, whereas the continental sailors in a difficulty called on their Saints to save them by a miracle, the English seamen, knowing very well that no miracles ever happened, performed those miracles for themselves.

“You don’t believe then in the Angels of Mons?”

THE SOLDIER

“No,” said the soldier contemptuously, “nor no other angels. Why have an Army or Navy at all if angels are going to do the work?”

“Besides,” said the man, “there was a defeat.”

“I knew many of the men who fought at Mons,” said the soldier. “They were heroes if ever men were, and they’re mostly dead now. They did their utmost, but the Germans were too many for them. And to talk of angels!”

“God is behind the big battalions,” said the man.

The soldier nodded. “And those nations who won’t save themselves aren’t worth saving.”

• There was a long pause, and at last the soldier rose.

“There will have to be great changes after this war,” he said. “We are not fighting and giving our lives to let this sort of thing go on, to let them vote who

FOR ENGLAND

would not fight, or to let incapable politicians delude us any more. There are a great many things to be changed after this war."

"I hope so," said the man. "Very many things. But it is you and yours who will have to change them. If not, things will go back to worse than they were before."

The soldier's eye brightened. "We'll see to that."

"Meanwhile," said the man smiling, "a happy return to France some day or other."

The soldier was just going out, but stopped and looked back. The flush again had come into his cheeks. He saluted and went out.

But the man sat there very thoughtful. Before him the long valley filled with the evening glow and behind a long backed down the sun was setting.

ENGLAND OF MINE

ENGLAND of mine, our fathers knew
Thee as their mother, noble, wise;
Their mother loving, tender, true,
With shelt'ring arms and laughing eyes.

Our fathers loved thee, England mine;
Thou wast to them the foremost truth,
Their love was like a draught divine
That gave to thee eternal youth.

Then couldst thou face a world in arms
Nor dread whate'er the years might bear,
Then couldst thou laugh at all alarms
Secure within thy children's care.

But of late years thou hast grown old,
Thou hast forgotten to be glad,
And brooding o'er thy bags of gold
Thou hast turned peevish, pious, sad.

The envious nations heard thee groan.
"Departed is her youth and pride;
She sits deserted and alone,
Now is our chance to kill," they cried.

FOR ENGLAND

England of mine, they try and try,
The battle wavers to and fro.
Thou still hast sons for thee to die,
But England mine, what dost *thou* do ?

Hast thou repented ? Hast thou cast
Thy evil councillors from thee ?
Made strong thy face to brave the blast
And cheer thy sons to victory ?

Has all the blood poured out for thee
Upon that stricken battle plain
Not taught thee to be strong and free,
Nor washed thee young and brave again ?

Our fathers loved thee, England mine,
For thou wast loving, true, and brave,
And freedom made thee glad like wine.
England, we cannot love a slave.

Mother of mine, Arise, Awake !
Deserve our love as thou didst then,
And though the earth's foundations shake
It shall not daunt us Englishmen.

THE GOVERNESS

THE GOVERNESS

I

THE funeral was over, the volley had been fired, and the long sad notes of "The Last Post" died away across the cemetery. Another soldier had rejoined that great army of the brave who have passed beyond our sight. "Sleep well," the bugles said. "Sleep well. Thou hast deserved thy rest. Sleep well." And then the mourners turned to go away.

A woman walked in front alone, in widow's weeds. She was a young woman still, and plain and poor. But she was brave. She did not drop her veil to hide her tears, but held her head up resolutely and walked slowly and strongly down the path.

Her cheeks were pale and her eyes very

FOR ENGLAND

full. But on her face there was a light as of one who saw things to come though far away, as she that watches after a long night of dark and gloom and sees at length a light upon the hills beyond.

As she went the people whispered curiously after her. She had only known him a week when they married—at least so I am told—and two days afterwards he died. It must be a strange story.

It is this story, or rather her story up to the time of the funeral, that I am about to tell. It is not a strange story if by that is meant that there are few women in the condition she was in. There are many thousands, and there should be none.

Nor is it strange in that the war taught her to see life more truly, more hopefully, more spiritually, than she had done before, because that is what wars do, that is what wars are for. And for that

THE GOVERNESS

reason there must always be wars, until, if ever, nations can learn to be brave and hopeful and intelligent without wars. So far no nations have ever discovered that secret. In a long peace they become always cowards, afraid to look life in the face, afraid to understand it, afraid to make the best of it, and above all afraid of death. They become listless, nerveless, glorifying money and ease and a materialistic peace. They make life not worth living, and then complain that it is so, and finally denounce the Intelligence who made the world for so making it. A stagnant nation is a rotten nation, and only wars have been able so to stir its chill blood as to make it alive again. Wars are a terrible cost to pay, but what they bring us is beyond all price—new truth, new courage, new life.

FOR ENGLAND

II

She was born twenty-six years ago, an only child. Her father, who was a country doctor, died when she was twelve, but her mother was left with an adequate income. So the girl was brought up in the usual way, that is to say, that she was taught a number of accomplishments, and nothing else. Of the world about her she was wholly ignorant, that being the proper conventional frame of mind for a girl, and she was led to look forward to marriage as her vocation and to trust that her complete ignorance of all things would enable her to adorn her husband's home and bring up her children wisely.

She was, however, too plain to attract any lovers as a young girl, and when she was nineteen her mother died and she was left alone. And then immediately she

THE GOVERNESS

began to acquire knowledge of the real world, for she found herself destitute.

What had become of the comfortable sum her father left was never clearly established. There was a trustee under her father's will, but he declared that there was no money left. There was more than suspicion of fraud on his part, and had the girl been able to go to law she might have recovered much of it. But she could not resort to law, because she was almost penniless. Law in England, as she discovered, is made by lawyers, in the first place to benefit themselves, and, secondly, to protect the rich against the poor. Justice and law are not the same, and even such law as there is must be bought at enormous expense, and after ruinous delays. It was quite hopeless for her, as it is for any poor person, to do anything. England is a Christian country and the motto of its Law Courts is: "To him who hath shall

FOR ENGLAND

be given and from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath."

The trustee belonged to the first class and she to the second. Therefore there was nothing left for her but to become a governess and use her accomplishments to get her bread. So when this story begins she had been a governess for six years. At first she entered upon her work with pleasure and enthusiasm, glad to be able to earn a living, glad to have a part in the life of the world, hoping that in what she taught the children there might be good. But all that had faded long ago and now she saw her life in its true colours. She belonged to no class, neither to that of her employers above, nor to that of the servants beneath. She had no society, and very little salary. She was utterly alone and very poor, and so she would always be, because there was no one to help governesses. She must have no opinions about anything,

80

THE GOVERNESS

must not read anything, must not talk about anything but childish things because she was always with children. She would never learn anything, never see life in any wider horizon, never have any change. And she must bring up child after child to be as ignorant as she was herself. So all that was left to her, as to so many of her class, were courage and resignation.

In the beginning of 1914 she had gone as governess to the house of Sir James Horton, who lived in the Stone House two miles from Sleepy Hollow.

Sir James had been twice married. By his first wife he had a son who had joined the army before war broke out, and by the second wife there were two small girls. These latter were her pupils.

III

Outside the rain poured steadily, filling the valleys with grey mist. Upon the

downs the clouds hung heavily, drifting, with dull monotony like a procession of sad, formless thoughts freighted with great unhappiness. And within the schoolroom it was not much more cheerful. The winter light came in, so cold and grey that one could hardly have seen to read, and even the fire burned slowly and dully. The children in the window seat had lost their usual liveliness and gazed sadly at the falling rain, and the governess sewed at the table patiently and mechanically.

Then there came a knock upon the door and the two children turned.

"That is father's knock," they said.

The door half opened and Horton's head appeared. "May I come in?" he asked. "I am not interrupting lessons, am I?"

The two children ran to him and the governess answered, "These are the holidays, Sir James."

THE GOVERNESS

“Of course,” he said, and entered. “I had forgotten. Well, girls, I have some news from your brother.”

“From Fred?” asked one.

“From the war?” asked the other.

“From Fred and from the war. It is about how they spent Christmas in the trenches. Come and sit here and I will read some of it aloud. We won’t disturb you, I hope,” he added to the governess.

“No,” she answered. “But perhaps you would rather I went away,” and she made to rise.

“Please don’t,” said Horton. “There is nothing private in the letter and it may interest you too. This war touches all of us, is life or death to all of us alike who love our country.” He looked at her in question and she bowed.

Then he began to read and the children listened.

But the governess did not listen. For indeed her mind was too full of thoughts

FOR ENGLAND

to listen, thoughts awakened by his words, "all of us who love our country," thoughts that were not sweet but bitter. Did she love her country? Why should she love her country? Did England love her, had England ever done anything for her; was it even aware of her existence? After all, love, to be secure and endure, must be reciprocal, and what cared England for her? It had education systems, but not for her; it made labour exchanges, but not for her; it had insurance schemes, but not for her; it had Courts of Law, but not for her. It gave only to the strong who could take by force, but the weak it cared nothing about. It left them to be preyed upon by anyone who would. Why therefore should she love England? She hated England, hated her for her cruelty to the weak, her hypocrisy, her mingling of fine words and ignoble acts. She hated . . . hated . . . hated.

And so the reading of the letter came

THE GOVERNESS

to an end and Sir James Horton went away.

IV

She lay and turned and turned again, but could not sleep. She tried to make a silence in her brain from words that echoed and re-echoed there, but could not do so. She did not want the words, they were not hers, nor did they in any way concern her. Yet they would not be silenced nor be put aside. Well, then, she would listen once and so still the voice.

“He is a gentleman and a fine soldier and he is alone. No one knows him and he receives no letters nor any presents. No one ought to be like that, alone, when he is fighting for his country.”

Yes. They were from the letter that had been read aloud, but she had not noted them at the time. So why had they remained with her?

What were soldiers to her? They

FOR ENGLAND

fought for England because they loved her. They had reason. She had not.

Who in all England ever cared or thought for her, and in return why should she care for anyone ?

Fighting was wrong and wicked. Had she not been told so ever since a child ?

Everyone who drew the sword would go to hell. They ought to turn the other cheek. So she had been taught.

They were all evil-minded, why should she think of them if they got wounded—haven't they tried to wound others ? If they got killed—weren't they trying to kill ?

So she would forget and sleep.

What was this soldier, or any soldier, to her ? Nothing.

So she would go to sleep.

To sleep.

Only sleep would not come.

It came, however, an hour later when her handkerchief was wet with tears and

THE GOVERNESS

a letter written in pencil to an unknown soldier was under her pillow.

For the words ceased then and she was at peace.

V

She sat and gazed in the distance, that blue distance that lay on the moor. For from where she sat there was an opening in the wood that allowed her eyes to travel far and take her thoughts abroad. The children played among the bushes and, below, a river ran. The oaks as yet were hardly tinged with green, but the elms and beeches were half fledged and the larches made an emerald glory on the hill sides.

For May was come when all the world is troubled with the hope, the love, the anguish of the spring. The stream was laughing, birds were fighting, wooing, nesting, singing songs of love and war and all the beauty of the world. The sky was

FOR ENGLAND

blue and there were little clouds that drifted from the west, like long-lost galleons from the Spanish main.

But every now and then her eyes came back from the distance to some letters on her knee. There were certain passages marked and worn and she would pick up one and read and think and read again.

“I am sorry for you and I admire you because you are a governess. For to be a governess you must be brave, and not every man or woman is that. Life is cruel to you and yet you face it with courage and sincerity. It is you who save children from doting, ignorant, and foolish mothers; it is you who teach them a little discipline, a little industry, a little common sense. If you do not teach them more it is not your fault. But your life is dull. It is impossible to learn anything. It is not really life, but only endurance.

THE GOVERNESS

“You ask me if soldiers are not afraid. Of course they are afraid. Where would be their courage if they were not afraid? Courage is the reaction from fear, the conquest of fear. And fear is the most terrible thing in the world. It is cold and deadly. But fear is a liar. If you can conquer him enough to be able to face life and death clearly and sincerely you soon find there is nothing you cannot bear, nothing really to fear—except fear. And fear exists not in outside things, but within you.

.
“No one naturally has any spiritual fear of death. Children have not. The fear of death is deliberately awakened in children by religions in order to bring them under the rule of priests.

“In war you lose it again. The physical fear remains more or less because it belongs, not to you, but to your organism, and is necessary to it. Remember

FOR ENGLAND

the organism, the body, is dissolved for ever on death. Naturally it instinctively fears death. But the spirit is immortal. Why should it fear? The spiritual fear of death is a cancer that grows in peace, and is destroyed by war.

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“War is the purifier of the spirit. I came to the trenches, to learn that. I have learnt it.

.
“War does not make you callous. Peace does that, because it leaves you spiritually and mentally and physically flabby. War strings you up and brings you into tune again.

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“I think, like most people who have no knowledge of war, that you greatly exaggerate its horrors. The life of a soldier is not more laborious nor hard than that of millions of working men. The soldier's life is a very healthy one

90

THE GOVERNESS

usually, and it is dignified by a devotion and courage the workman does not know. Death is not peculiar to war, nor created by war. Everyone has to die some time, and death in battle is usually far less painful than death on a sick bed. The thought of a battlefield sown thick with corpses terrifies the peace-dweller, but the sum total of suffering represented there is but a fraction of the sum total these dead men would have suffered had they died in peace. And they would have so to die. Do not forget that. Have you ever realised that the total monthly deaths in London equal those of a great battle?

“It is true that where a country is overrun as in Belgium the suffering is greatly increased, becomes intolerable. Then no country should allow itself to be overrun. There is a certain balance which, if every nation were equally intelligent and courageous, could not be upset. Wars are the result of one nation

FOR ENGLAND

being virile and the others decadent, foolish, and too cowardly to prepare for war.

“And war, internal or external, is the only escape from slavery, from the slavery of castes, religions, ideas which degrade and terrify, from cowardice spiritual and physical, from apathy, from that dry rot into which nations fall. No great awakening has ever come except by war. It is the great stimulant, spiritual and physical.

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“I came to the war because I was sick of life; war has made me enjoy it. I feared poverty, but now I have endured it I fear it no more.

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“As courage is the reaction from fear so love is the reaction from hate. Unless you hate your enemy you cannot love your friend. That love of country which is the supremest passion we know is only

THE GOVERNESS

awakened by hate of the nation which threatens your country.

“ God is behind the big battalions. That nation which is too foolish and too cowardly to prepare for war and do its utmost when war comes cannot expect to live. Nor is it fit to live. There is no room here for fools and cowards.

“ The man and nation which is best prepared for war is also best prepared for peace, to enjoy it and make the best of it.

“ The spirit is Intelligence and its most valuable quality is courage. You cannot cultivate courage unless you have faced danger.”

And then a last and most worn extract of all :—

“ If you feel life a misery, as you say, go out and fight. If you feel cowardly, go and face danger. If you are afraid of

FOR ENGLAND

life, go and face life. If you are afraid of penury, go and face penury. If you are afraid of death, go and face death. Whatever you are most afraid of go and find it and dare it. You will fear it no more. If, as you say, you now dislike teaching what you are sure is untrue, give it up. Never do what you are ashamed of because you are afraid. Do not be afraid. God is behind the big battalions. If you have courage and intelligence to look on life as it is and not as you wish it to be, you are a big battalion and He will be with you."

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The sun was falling towards the western down and it was time to return. She folded up her letters and she called the children. Then they went back together.

And that evening she gave Lady Horton warning.

THE GOVERNESS

VI

The winter sunlight came into the ward, bringing with it some of its own cheeriness and warmth. The nurses felt it moving more lightly to and fro; the wounded felt it and laughed back at it. Only one man seemed unaffected. There were bandages upon his eyes, and where his face was visible it was pale and thin. His hands were placed before him on the bed and did not move. Nevertheless he listened. It could be noticed that he expected something, wished or feared something, because whenever steps approached his bed his whole attitude, without altering, became more tense, and as the steps passed him he relaxed again. And there were many people going to and fro, for it was visiting day in the hospital.

At last the steps that approached did not pass but stopped.

FOR ENGLAND

A nurse came up beside him. "Sergeant Brown," she said.

"Yes, Nurse," he answered slowly.

"Here is a visitor for you."

The man neither answered nor moved in response, and the nurse continued: "You are not to talk too much. I will come back soon." Then she moved away, and the woman who had been a governess took her place and looked down at the man.

For a while neither spoke, and then she said: "You are blind."

"Yes," said the man.

"You did not tell me," and there was a catch in her voice.

He slowly shook his head, and the woman took the chair beside the bed.

"Will you recover?"

"No." And he slightly smiled.

She did not answer, but she lightly touched his hand.

"I shall never see you," said the man.

THE GOVERNESS

“You will be my unknown correspondent till the end.”

Her eyes were full. Her throat was choked ; she could not answer.

“And so,” he went on pleasantly, “you are a governess no more.”

“No more,” she said.

“It is one of my dreams,” he murmured, “that in the new England that is I trust to rise out of all this bloodshed and sorrow all teachers will be servants of the State, the most valued servants of the State, because it is they who form the new generations. They will be educated, honoured, paid. They will teach the truth—no child shall be taught anything but the truth.”

She smiled.

“Then you would be glad and proud to be a governess?”

“I would.”

“But now”—and he shook his head —“it is too dreadful.”

FOR ENGLAND

“Yes,” she answered. “To teach them what is not true. What I and they too know is not true, for children are very quick.”

“Until their minds are degraded.”

“Yes.”

“And so you left,” he murmured to himself. “And now—what do you do?”

“No matter,” she answered. “It is true work.”

“Hard?”

“Yes.”

“Ill-paid?”

“Yes.”

The man drew a little breath between his teeth. “You have courage,” he murmured. “Are you sorry?”

“No.”

“Are you afraid?”

“Not now,” she answered slowly, “but I was very much afraid at first.”

“Was the fear true?”

THE GOVERNESS

He smiled and she in answer smiled, although he could not see her.

“Fear is a braggart,” said the man. “I too believed him once, but I found him out. And you?”

“I too,” she answered.

There was a long pause. About them the ward was busy with visitors, and there came to them the low sound of voices, dull as in a dream.

“You have something you wanted to ask of me,” she said. “You said that in your letter when you told me you were wounded and in this hospital. It was something you could not write.”

“Yes,” said the man.

“Tell me,” she said slowly.

“No !” said the man. “Not to-day. Can you come again?”

“Yes ; next week,” she answered.

“Is—is it a bother to you ?” he asked.

She coloured, but he could not know.

“I like to come,” she answered.

FOR ENGLAND

“Then come,” he said. “And now Good-bye. I think the nurse is coming to send you away.”

“Good-bye,” she said, and after a moment’s hesitation took his hand that lay so listless on the bed. His pressure answered hers—and she was gone.

VII

But she had not to wait a week for news of him, for three days later she got a letter.

It was a strange letter, for in the first place it was a letter written not by one person but by two. The nurse had addressed the envelope and in her writing was the following :—

“I send you the enclosed by request of your friend. I have not seen it and do not know what he has written. But he wishes me to tell you that the doctors fear he may not recover at all, and indeed he

THE GOVERNESS

grows weaker. Therefore instead of waiting till he sees you next week he has written now. He asks you to think over what he has written, and to reply either 'Yes' or 'No' as soon as you can. But whether it is 'Yes' or 'No' you are to be sure to come and see him next week."

And within, scrawled in great letters across a big sheet of paper by the hand of the blind man, were the words : "I want you to marry me."

And without a moment's hesitation she sat down and wrote her answer, "Yes."

VIII

• They were alone together now, for a screen had been drawn round the bed where she sat and held his hand. He was her husband and he was dying fast ; before the new day came he would be dead.

FOR ENGLAND

“Our marriage has not been long,” he said. “Two days and now I go. Why did you marry me?” He smiled.

“Because you asked me.”

And after a pause, questioning in her turn, she said: “Why did you ask me?”

He shook his head. “I do not know. There is a little money I wanted you to have as my wife. But it was not that.”

“Not love,” she said, answering her own question.

“Not love,” he said. “Not love. I was in love once. It is an emotion of the flesh, a beautiful emotion it may be, but still an emotion. I never saw you, and the feeling I have to you is spiritual.”

“Yes,” she said. “And mine to you. I do not understand it.”

“No,” said the man.

“It is because you first woke the spirit in me,” she said.

THE GOVERNESS

“Did I?”

She only pressed his hand.

“I feel to you,” he said, “as I feel towards my comrades who faced death with me—who died and whom I will rejoin.”

“I too will come,” she whispered.

“You do not want to die yet?” he asked.

“Not yet,” she answered. “Not till I too have done my work. I am not afraid of life now and I like life.”

“Because it is a fight?”

“Yes,” she said.

“And in the end,” he murmured, “‘*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*’ That is worth all the texts of all the scriptures ever written.”

There was a long silence and he seemed to sleep. Indeed he never spoke to her again, never spoke consciously again at all. Only she caught the murmur as he

FOR ENGLAND

died: "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

Only the brave go to Valhalla. Whatever they tell you, never believe that cowards either of life or death go there.

THE HEROES' ROAD

SHE rose and left her widowed bed,
Last month she was a bride.
She sought to cool her fevered head
And thrêw the casement wide.
Above the night with stars was spread
The west wind softly sighed.
She yearned in love towards her dead
And to the night she cried :
“ Oh Wind of the West, go thou
And seek him where he lies
On the battle plain
Where he was slain
Beneath those distant skies.
Oh Wind of the West, go thou,
Bid him remember me.
In death, in life,
His love, his wife,
The same where'er he be.”

FOR ENGLAND

Her message o'er the narrow seas
The wind did swiftly bear,
She gazed abroad across the leas,
The night was silver clear.
A silence brooded in the trees,
The stars shone very near,
And soon to her returned the breeze
And whispered in her ear:
"Thy husband's bones have rest
In a grave full well I know,
But they rest alone,
For his soul has gone
To a place I cannot go.
Undone is thy behest,
I return thy words to thee.
Find thou elsewhere
Thy messenger.
It is too far for me."

She leaned far out across the sill,
'Great tears were in her eyes.
A mist lay over vale and hill,
A magic held the skies.

THE HEROES' ROAD

An agony her heart did fill
That an answer should arise,
But all the world was mute and still.
Her voice was choked with sighs.
“Is there none to go for me?
Will none my wish obey?
Now he is gone
I live alone
Till I too pass his way.
Is there none to say for me
‘Where thou art is my home.
Wilt thou not wait
Beside the gate
Until I too am come?’”

Her words in trembling took their flight
Far over field and dell.
They rose imperious to the height
An answer to compel.
Then came an awe upon the night
As One had cast a spell.
At last adown the dim star-light
To her an answer fell.

FOR ENGLAND

“ He has passed the heroes’ road
Which none but they may tread.
No messenger
Can travel there,
It is sacred to the dead.
He has reached the Gods’ abode
For he died for England’s sake.
If thou so live,
If thou so give,
That road thyself shall take.”

PATRIOTISM

PATRIOTISM

TWO men were seated on the rocks that crowned one of the downs and looked abroad across a wide stretch of country. A faint warm wind blew from out the south-west and low grey clouds drifted overhead. One man was young and wore a khaki uniform, but the other was more than middle-aged. They had been talking intermittently on the way up, but now there was a silence. Both were smoking, and for a time they were content to smoke and nothing else. Then at last the young man threw away his cigarette end and spoke.

“The root of the matter,” he said decisively, “of our unpreparedness for war, and our difficulties in getting ready now, is want of patriotism. It ran through all ranks. The Tory party which represents the aristocracy, equally with the Radical party which represents the people, would not prepare for war, would

FOR ENGLAND

not listen to Lord Roberts, and the difficulty still is that neither side trusts the other and is really for the country alone and not for class. There is a want of real patriotism."

"True," said the elder man. "And what is patriotism?"

The young man opened his eyes. "Love of one's country, isn't it?" he answered.

The elder man poked his stick into the turf, reflecting before he answered, and the answer seemed difficult to find. "Yes," he said at length. "Yes and no. That is to say, it includes love of country, but it is also far more."

"What more?" asked the young man.

"Love of country," said the elder man, "is a flower which grows only in congenial soil and under congenial circumstances. Therefore as love of country is an essential, true patriotism includes the knowledge of that soil and circumstances."

PATRIOTISM

“Isn’t it natural ? ” asked the younger.

“If it were natural it would be universal,” said the elder man, “but it is not.”

“Love of country ought to be taught,” said the young man.

“Love is an emotion and cannot be taught,” replied the elder man. “It is felt when the necessary conditions exist.”

“What are they ? ”

“Well,” said the elder man, “various ideas exist. When we get back I will show you three short sketches and then we will talk again.”

“Right,” said the young man.

And on their return the elder handed the younger the following :—

I

They were a small party and they were having afternoon tea on the lawn before the house. In front of them the garden fell away and there was a view across the valley to the far off downs. On both

FOR ENGLAND

sides were garden beds still gay with asters, roses, and the autumn gladiolus.

There were three men, all elderly, for the young men were all gone to the war, and four women. Two of the women were also middle-aged; there was a young girl and a young married woman. The two elder women were of that common type where propriety alone has to do the duty of intelligence, understanding, and humour; the young girl, like most girls, was negative; but the young married woman was a contrast to them all. She was, in fact, a visitor to Sleepy Hollow, and her face, though for the most part bored, could light up into a vivid intelligence and a wicked humour. In France they would have said that she had *le diable au corps*, and indeed she was French.

“It’s pleasant to come down into the country,” said one of the men. “Town is a dull place now. No dinners, no amusements. I went into the Aristo-

PATRIOTISM

craticon for supper the other night and it was almost deserted. You remember the suppers there."

"My husband took me there once," said the hostess, "and I liked it very much. But I thought it very expensive."

"All really good things are expensive," said another man. "A ten pound note didn't go far in town. Now we are all economising."

"And don't like it," said Madame with a laugh.

"No one likes it, of course," grumbled the host. "I have had to put down two hunters. And to think that all this is due to the British workman. He wouldn't have conscription."

"Wouldn't he?" asked Madame surprised. "Not when you all told him he ought to? Didn't he believe your—what do you call it?—Party, Tory party when it said so?"

There was a cold silence for a time,

FOR ENGLAND

some of them perhaps remembering that it was Lord Lansdowne who attacked Lord Roberts for trying to awaken the nation to its danger, and that the Unionists no less than the other side had only played for party gains.

“You must be glad to get a rest, Colonel,” said the hostess. “You have been working very hard, haven’t you?”

The Colonel nodded. “It’s weary work collecting recruits, but it’s nothing to what Slatterthwaite has been doing.”

“What has Mr. Slatterthwaite been doing?” the chorus asked.

“He’s been working at a munition factory,” returned the Colonel. “He’s a good man with his hands, you know, did everything about his house at Combe Regis himself. He offered himself as a mechanic and they took him.”

There was a murmur of approval.

“He has to be at work at six every morning,” continued the Colonel, “and

PATRIOTISM

works ten hours. The work is skilled work. If it is less than one-hundredth part of an inch wrong it is thrown away."

"That's fine work," said one of the men. "It must be a great strain on the eyes and the attention."

The Colonel nodded.

"Does he get any pay?" asked one of the British matrons, looking up from a sock she was knitting for a soldier.

"He didn't want any, of course," said the Colonel. "Slatterthwaite is well off and he works only from patriotism, but he was told he must be paid."

"Why?" asked one of the men.

"Trade Union?" suggested the other.

"I think so," said the Colonel. And the whole party, Madame alone excepted, expressed by its stiffened attitude its opinion of Trade Unions.

"Anyhow he had to accept two pounds a week. I believe he might even have

FOR ENGLAND

got four. A Trade Union man would have got four."

"What? Two hundred pounds a year for a workman?" asked the hostess.

"Preposterous," said the other two men.

"It's wicked," said the British matron, folding her hands and gazing, resigned, into the distance.

"Double as much as a subaltern," said the Colonel. "And the subaltern is a gentleman."

The cold silence of disapproval which followed the realisation that a workman could earn so much was broken by a fresh, clear voice. It was Madame's voice:

"Surely that is very wrong," she said cheerfully. "What do they do it for?"

"Trade Union," said the men all together.

"Oh, I *see*," she said gratefully. "I was thinking that it might be because

PATRIOTISM

the workman must be a very good man and highly skilled and have practised many years to be so good at such fine work, while the subaltern is only a beginner. But I see that I was wrong."

"It is far too much for *any* workman to be allowed to earn," said the hostess, kindly condescending to her guest's ignorance.

"Of course," said Madame, casting down her eyes like a schoolgirl at her mistress's reproof.

"When they can earn so much they get wrong ideas into their heads," continued the hostess. "Money is very demoralising."

"To the workman?" asked Madame.

"Of course," said the Colonel impressively. "They don't know how to spend money when they get it. They are not educated."

"No," said Madame, shaking her head in grave assent. "I have been several

FOR ENGLAND

times to the Aristocraticon, but never did I see a workman having supper there."

"They waste their money," continued the hostess. "I have even heard of a workman buying grapes—muscatel grapes."

"C'est grave," said Madame to herself. But no one was attending to her. They were tired of explaining and preferred speaking to sympathetic ears.

"That shows how little real patriotism they have," said the host. "The only real patriotism is in our class. There are no shirkers here."

There was a murmur from each one of "No." And indeed they had right to pride themselves on this. There have been no shirkers among the richer classes. Even Madame bowed in agreement.

"But with the poor it is different. Most of those who do enlist do so only because the pay and especially the separation allowances are so good," said the

PATRIOTISM

Colonel. "It's perfectly absurd the amount that a man can draw for his family if he has many children. No wonder so many married men enlist."

"And it's we who have to pay," said another man.

"While officers are so badly paid," said the British matron.

"It's all a matter of self-interest with the lower classes," said the hostess. "England to them means nothing."

"But to us it means so much," said the Colonel.

"There is never any real patriotism except among an aristocracy and a nation that is led by its aristocracy," said the hostess.

That this statement met with general approval could be seen in their faces, and no doubt had it been challenged they would have referred to the days of Elizabeth as evidence.

While if Madame, though remaining

FOR ENGLAND

silent, inwardly dissented strongly, could she not have pointed to France under the first Republic and the First Empire, in 1871, and at the present time, in justification of her dissent ?

II

The bar of the “Druid’s Arms” was unusually full that night, especially of young men. Partly this was due to the fact that it was Saturday night, but principally because of news in the papers a few days before that those who would not enlist voluntarily would be fetched. So the young men of the neighbourhood had collected to discuss the matter and whether they would go voluntarily or wait.

But for a time the conversation wandered among indifferent subjects, while the beer was slowly absorbed, till at last there came a long pause and then a young man spoke.

PATRIOTISM

“Well, Charlie,” he said, addressing a finely made, smart young farmer, “What’s it to be? Go or wait?”

Charlie took a sip of his beer reflectively and shook his head. “’Tain’t so easy to answer,” he replied. “It ain’t just ‘Go’ or ‘Stay’; there’s a lot to it.”

“Aye, aye,” said the other young men.

“If,” said another, “I thought they were going to bring in this here conscription I wouldn’t wait. I’d go now.”

“Sooner than be fetched,” asked Mrs. Mannon from behind the bar.

“’Tain’t that,” said Charlie.

“No,” said another young man called Jim. “It’s because of the fairness of it. If all has to go then ’tis fair for all, but when some goes and some stays it isn’t fair. Look at me. Suppose I go, who’ll do the butchering for father? He is too old and Willy is too young. Our business would go down and the business of them as don’t go would go up. That ain’t fair.”

FOR ENGLAND

There was a murmur of approval, and another man said: "I goes, and when I come back, if I do come back, I find another man who stays here has got my business and my girl."

There was a laugh, and Mrs. Mannon put in: "Didn't know you were engaged, Robert. Who's she?"

The young man called Robert blushed. "I ain't got one. I was just putting a case," he answered.

"You'll know better when you get one," said Mrs. Mannon.

"What I say," said Charlie, "is that things ain't equal. It's easy for the rich to be patriotic, as they call it, because if they're killed their wives are comfortable, and if they're wounded for life they are. It's a fine business for one of us to lose an arm and live on a pension all his life."

"And it ain't so bad for just a working man," added Jim, "because for him the

PATRIOTISM

pay and pension aren't so bad. Patriotism begins at home, say I."

"But don't stay there," says Mrs. Mannon.

There was a silence while new drinks were ordered, and then there came a voice from the corner.

"Somebody's got to keep them Germans out," it said. "I don't want 'em here."

They all turned round and looked at a thin, sharp-looking old man who was just refilling his pipe. It seemed as if he was something of an oracle and that they expected from him some advice worth having.

"Don't ye, Perkins?" asked Charlie sarcastically.

"No!" said Perkins. "And what I say is that every man what has a vote ought to go. Because look ye here. If ye have a vote ye're part of the Government and must support it."

There was a silence of consideration

FOR ENGLAND

and Charlie answered, "Maybe we'd have a vote if there was a 'lection. But there ain't been none since I was twenty-one."

"But your father voted," said Perkins.

"And what's the good of a vote anyhow?" put in Jim. "Two sets of fellers come down and gas about and daze ye with promises and words. Ye must vote for one or other though you'd rather vote for neither. What's a vote?"

No one seemed to have any answer to this conundrum and for a time the only sound was the gurgling of beer and the drawing of pipes. Then someone remarked:

"And what's patriotism? The German Emperor wishes to be Emperor of Europe and says to his people, 'Come and be patriotic and fight for me.' The French don't like it, and says, 'Come and be patriotic and kill the Germans.' The Italians want a place called Trieste, they tell me, so their Government says to its

PATRIOTISM

people, ‘Come and be patriotic and get Trieste.’ King Ferdinand don’t like King Peter, and so says to his Bulgarians, ‘Come and be patriotic and slate them Serbians.’ I don’t say they all aren’t right, mind you, only What is patriotism?”

But an abstract question like this was too much for the company and no one answered. They had come there to decide what they individually were going to do in the matter of enlisting and not to launch out into world-politics. The matter was to them a very serious and personal and urgent matter and no generalities should obscure this in their minds.

What ought they to do, and why?

So for that night they decided to do nothing.

FOR ENGLAND

III

(i)

The last notes of the mournful hymn died away across the fast darkening market-place, the scanty listeners lounged off, and the itinerant preacher and his mother, who had stood by him all the time, made ready to depart. But a little man with grey hair and whiskers who had joined heartily in the singing came up and stayed them. "Come and have supper with us," he said warmly. "My wife expects you to come. She couldn't come to your service because of the children, but she hopes to see you at home."

The preacher looked at his mother and she answered for both of them. "My son is tired," she said, "but still we shall be very glad to come."

They moved away. The would-be host, who was a small shopkeeper named

128

PATRIOTISM

Ferney, walking besides Mrs. Brogden. They turned down Hill Street towards the main road.

“My wife will be very glad to see you, Mrs. Brogden,” said Ferney. “She takes great stock in him.”

Mrs. Brogden smiled the smile of one who hears her own property praised.

“She’ll be sorry she didn’t hear his words this evening,” he continued. “True words, Mrs. Brogden, true words. Pity it is so few to listen to them.”

“My son preaches well,” said Mrs. Brogden.

“There’d be no more wars if they’d mind him,” said Ferney.

Mrs. Brogden looked at him reprovingly. “Not *his* words, Mr. Ferney.”

“It’s the way he puts it,” said Ferney. “So persuading.”

They had reached Ferney’s house and stopped at the side door. But Ferney hesitated before opening it.

FOR ENGLAND

"I ought to tell you," he said, "that Mr. Collins, my wife's father, will be at supper too."

There was a sudden stiffness on the part of mother and son.

"You won't be afraid of him," entreated Ferney. "He's a bit plain spoken, but he has a good heart."

"In the Lord's service I fear no one," said Brogden.

"He does not see with us," said Mrs. Brogden coldly.

"No, no," said Ferney. "But it's supper, you know, not service. He'll be glad to see you too. Come in."

And with that he opened the side door and drew them in.

(ii)

There was but little conversation during the first part of supper, everybody being too busy satisfying their hunger to have much leisure for conversation. Only Mr.

PATRIOTISM

Collins, a big, healthy farmer of nearly eighty, had thrown an apple of discord among the party. The apple was fermented into excellent cider, and the old man pushed it across to Mr. Brogden with a grin. "Help yourself, preacher," he said. "Ye must be dry after talking so much."

"Thank you," said Brogden, severely repulsing the jug. "I am an abstainer from alcoholic drinks."

"He has never tasted them," said his mother with pride. "He has been a Rechabite from birth."

"Then you don't know what you're refusing," said the old man, pouring himself out a foaming mugful.

"All alcohol is evil," said the preacher.

"Makes us too cheerful, eh?" laughed the old man. "Cheerfulness is a sin maybe. Well, here's luck, anyhow," and he drank it down. "You never wish anyone luck, do you? Can't do it in tea, you know."

"I hope," said Mrs. Ferney, cutting in

FÖR ENGLAND

“that your tea is to your liking, Mr. Brogden. Or will you have another lump of sugar?”

“Thank you, no,” said Brogden severely. “The tea is excellent.”

There was a pause and the old farmer began again.

“Dick and Charlie went off this morning,” he said.

“Where to?” asked Ferney incautiously.

“The war,” said the old man. “Grandsons of mine,” he explained to Mrs. Brogden. “Good lads. But Charlie is a bit young yet. However, there was no holding him. If his father had refused leave he’d have bolted.”

“It must be a great grief to you,” said Mrs. Brogden, “and to their poor mother.”

“Eh?” said the old man, sitting up. “What? ’Tain’t no grief to any of us that a Collins is a brave lad.”

“War is a sad thing,” said Brogden.

PATRIOTISM

"The more reason to face it bravely," said the old man.

"All wars are unchristian," said Mrs. Brogden.

"Can man find nothing better to do than kill his neighbour?" said Brogden.

"Neighbour," said Collins loudly. "No German is neighbour to me, preacher. Don't you believe it."

There was a cold silence, into which Mrs. Ferney plunged with courage.

"When we lived at Bellminster before we came here," she said, "we did have a German as neighbour. He was a hair-dresser, and a nice, mild-mannered man too."

"Probably a spy," said Collins, recovering his temper.

"I met a Moravian missionary when I was at the seminary," said Brogden. "He was a good man and a true Christian."

"Well, preacher," said the old farmer. "And what do you say? May not a Christian fight?"

FOR ENGLAND

Both Mr. and Mrs. Brogden shook their heads.

“Not for his country?” asked Collins.

“Our country is not here,” said Brogden solemnly.

“Isn’t it?” said Collins. “Well, mine is.”

“Patriotism,” said Mrs. Brogden, shaking her head, “is only an excuse for evil-minded men who want to break God’s laws.”

“So if Germany wants England you’d let her have it rather than fight?” he asked.

“I would, as a Christian man,” answered the preacher.

The old farmer gazed at him with open mouth. For a moment it seemed as if he was about to make some explosive remark, but he thought better of it. He finished his cider in one draught and then rose.

“Mary,” he said to his daughter, “I’ll be off now. It’s more than a step home.”

“Oh, father,” she said dutifully. “It’s early yet.”

PATRIOTISM

"Time for old men to be at home," he replied, and then with a hasty farewell all round he left. Mr. and Mrs. Ferney looked at each other, and Mr. Ferney said:

"There, there. 'Tis only father. You aren't offended, Mr. Brogden?"

"Not me," he answered meekly. "I forgive my enemies. And I show the truer patriotism by showing my fellow countrymen the way to the future at the expense of the present than by urging them to fight for their country and so peril their immortal souls."

The two Ferneys looked at him in dismay. "Oh! But, Mr. Brogden," began Ferney, when Mrs. Brogden interposed.

"I think it's time to go home," she said. "And thank you so much for your good supper, Mrs. Ferney. Come, Jonathan. Now wrap up your throat. The air is cold."

And so they went away.

The young man finished reading and

put down the papers thoughtfully.

“Well?” said the elder man. “Does patriotism seem so simple now?”

“No, indeed,” said the younger. “I must have time to think over it. Meanwhile what are your inferences?”

“Well,” said the elder man, “I should say that patriotism, like everything else of value, is a matter of the intelligence. Those men are truly patriotic who are able to see that a nation is a whole in which every part is as necessary as every other, and that the health of the whole depends on the health of every detail. Nothing is negligible. The duty of each man is to the country and not to class, and the claim of every man to honour or authority depends on his personal services to the nation and not to party. Patriotism is as necessary in peace as in war, and those nations that are best prepared for war are best prepared for peace; to make the best of it and enjoy it. A true sense of patriotism is necessary as the foundation

PATRIOTISM

to all real progress and to all the virtues. Without patriotism nations decay and the whole of their domestic life is poisoned. They are unhealthy." "And when," asked the young man, "is a State healthy? As an Empire, a monarchy, an aristocracy, a democracy, or a theocracy?"

"As to the *form* of government," returned the elder, "that I should say depended entirely on circumstances. The essential of a healthy State is that every man, woman, and child should feel that he has a place in the life of the State, that he is necessary to the State as the State is to him, and that as the State cares for him and is always ready to assist him so his duty is to it first before everything."

"And merely having a vote means nothing?"

"Nothing."

"And that all men are equal?"

"No, for men are not equal in that sense. The essence of life is its inequality. Some men and classes require greater care

FOR ENGLAND

than others, and some are more fitted to fill higher posts. But all should receive what they need, and exercise such power as they are fit for. No authority should belong to a class—as such.”

The young man nodded. “And Theocracy?”

“There can be no such thing. There can be priestocracy. But neither intelligence nor patriotism has ever been a religious virtue or ever can be. They are opposed. The chosen people, whether of the Old or New Testament, have no country and are consequently without patriotism and all the great virtues to which it gives rise. The greatest exhibitions of intelligence and patriotism occur in States which have thrown off religious ideas, as, for instance, Rome before the Empire, England in Elizabeth’s time, France in 1800; and for the reverse consider the Papal States before the awakening of Italy, and India of to-day.

“In estimating the value of all the

PATRIOTISM

religious and moral talk as to the wickedness of war and the criminality of Germany in attacking us you must consider the following facts. Everything we have was gained by the sword ; India, Africa, Gibraltar, Malta. Australia was taken from the blacks, Canada from France, who in her turn took it from the Indians, New Zealand from the Maori. Even England cannot be said to belong to us by any right but that of might. Where are the descendants of the original inhabitants? We, 'the English,' are not their descendants, but a mixed race made up of successive waves of invaders. Our trade also we owe to our Empire and therefore to the sword.

“ If therefore those who declare that war is wrong and that might is never right were sincere they would voluntarily surrender all our Empire and retire. I don't know where—off the earth probably. They are not fit to live on it. They are not sincere. It is all cant.

FOR ENGLAND

“ Having gained as much as we can by the sword, we are now grown lazy and cowardly and moral and religious. We won't give up our gains, but we want to keep them without exertion. Therefore anyone who proposes to relieve us of any of our gains is ‘immoral,’ ‘wicked,’ ‘uncivilised,’ ‘barbarous,’ and God ought to defend us.”

The young man laughed. “ You make me think of a rhyme.”

“ What rhyme ? ”

“ ‘ When the Devil was sick, the
Devil a Saint would be.

When the Devil was well, the
Devil a Saint was he.’ ”

“ Just so,” said the elder man. “ But he was an intelligent and patriotic man. He looked life in the face and was not afraid, and he wrought great benefits for all his countrymen. He abolished poverty, misery, and crime, and cultivated happiness and well-being.”

WATCHMAN

WATCHMAN ! What of the night ?

The night is dark,
So dark, so black I cannot see afar ;
There are no homely fires, no, not one
spark,
There is no moon nor star.

Watchman ! I felt some rain.

The sky droops low
O'erburdened with the heavy clouds it
bears,
Great drops are falling, heavy drops and
slow,
And they are salt like tears.

Watchman ! The air is thick.

The earth is draped
In mists that motionless upon it brood.
They lie like palls in which the dead are
wrapped,
And they are red with blood.

FOR ENGLAND

Watchman ! What sounds are those ?

Sounds of the night ...

That rise and pass and die and rise
again.

They seem like curses wrung from those
who fight

And groans of dying men.

Watchman ! I see a flare.

Corpse lights that pass,

Borne on a homeless wind, or fires of
death

That sear and burn even the humble
grass

Under their fiery breath.

Watchman ! I cannot sleep.

Arise, I say.

This is no time to sleep, to mourn, to
cry.

Get thee to work, make ready for the
day,

For those who sleep will die.

WATCHMAN

But those who watch and work will see
the morn

Break through the darkness and the fog
of strife,

For them will a new day, new world, be
born,

New hope, new truth, new life.

Watchman ! What is thy name ?

Courage am I.

Come take my hand, and let us forward
fare.

Gird on thy sword and bear thee man-
fully,

For thou must take thy share.

Watchman, I come. Hold thou thy
lamp to light

My early footsteps lest I faint or
stray.

I know that thou wilt guide my steps
aright

Until we meet the day.

FOR ENGLAND

Comrade, I know that thou alone art
wise,

And, even if I fall upon the way,
Whether with these or with new clearer
eyes

I still shall see the day.

